UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FOURTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
66th meeting
held on
Monday, 10 September 1990
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 66th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of the draft resolutions in document A/44/24/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1/Rev.1 on agenda item 36

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of the draft resolutions in document A/44/24/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1/Rev.1 on agenda item 36 (A/C.5/44/56/Rev.1)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) recalled that in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 it had been indicated that, in the light of major developments relating to the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and following the launching of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group, it was difficult at that stage to define precisely the nature and scope of activities falling under programme 3 (Namibia) of chapter IV of the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989. On that basis a provisional amount of $19,568,200 had been included in the programme budget, reflecting the revaluation of the resources appropriated for 1988-1989.

2. In section V of resolution 44/201 B, the General Assembly had accepted the Secretary-General's estimate for section 3C (Namibia) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, as endorsed by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The General Assembly had also noted that the Secretary-General would submit revised estimates for that section at its forty-fifth session. It was the Advisory Committee's understanding that those revised estimates would take into account and provide further details on the estimates contained in the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications.

3. If the General Assembly adopted draft resolution A, as set out in the report of the United Nations Council for Namibia (A/44/24/Add.1/Corr.1/Rev.1), the Secretary-General would be required to provide the necessary resources for the implementation of the programme of activities approved by the Council for 1990 and set forth in annex I to the draft resolutions. As shown in the table following paragraph 29 of document A/C.5/44/56/Rev.1, the related requirements were estimated at $291,800 for 1990-1991.

4. Draft resolution A also requested the Secretary-General to consider as a matter of priority the redeployment of the staff of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia within the United Nations Secretariat and other organizations of the system. The statement of programme budget implications did not, however, address that requirement. The Advisory Committee had been informed that the redeployment and related costs would be reflected in the revised estimates to be submitted to the General Assembly.

5. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution B, it would decide that the United Nations Fund for Namibia would continue to operate in order to ensure the completion of all programmes and activities currently financed from it. The Advisory Committee understood that those activities would include the Nationhood

Programme Account of the Fund, the General Account of the Fund and the Institute for Namibia Account.

6. The Nationhood Programme Account currently financed training and education projects for Namibians, including a Vocational Training Centre in Angola which was to be relocated in Namibia in late 1990 or early 1991. The General Account, in addition to supporting similar training projects, including a secondary school in the Congo, also provided scholarships and social and medical assistance for Namibian students and expatriots. As shown in the table in paragraph 29 of document A/C.5/44/56/Rev.1, related staff requirements were estimated at $56,000 for 1990-1991.

7. The Advisory Committee noted from paragraph 14 of the Secretary-General's statement that an amount of $1.5 million appropriated under the regular budget for 1990 had already been credited to the United Nations Fund for Namibia. The Advisory Committee had been informed that the activities enumerated in annex II to the draft resolution which were financed from the Nationhood Programme Account and the General Account would be completed by 1994.

8. Under the terms of draft resolution B, the General Assembly would also establish the United Nations Trust Committee for the United Nations Fund for Namibia to serve as trustee of the Fund until its dissolution. The Advisory Committee interpreted that to mean that the Fund would be dissolved by 1994 upon completion of the activities referred to in annex II to the draft resolution and that the Trust Committee would therefore cease to exist at that time. The requirements for provision of substantive and conference services to the Trust Committee for the period 1990-1991 were estimated at $32,200 and would be covered under section 29 (Conference and library services) of the programme budget.

9. Draft resolution B also envisaged that the United Nations Institute for Namibia would cease operations on 30 September 1990 and that the Secretary-General would be requested to see to the closing of the Institute, liquidate its assets and discharge its liabilities. The Advisory Committee noted from the statement submitted by the Secretary-General that sufficient resources were not available in the Institute for Namibia Account of the Fund to meet the financial requirements of the Institute. In addition, weaknesses in the Institute's financial accounting made it difficult to determine the full extent of its financial problems. The current estimates indicated that the Institute's revised budget for 1990 exceeded income and cash resources carried forward from 1989 by approximately $1.4 million. Financial requirements for staff involved in liquidating the assets and discharging the liabilities of the Institute were estimated at $102,300. If the maximum liability of $1.4 million in respect of the final net deficit of the Institute's account were included, the total became $1,502,300, as shown in the table in the Secretary-General's statement.

10. The Secretary-General had indicated that the estimated requirements for activities called for under the resolutions totalled $1,882,900, $1,850,700 of which would fall under section 3 and $32,200 under section 29. The amount of

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(Mr. Mselle)

$1,850,700 under section 3, when added to the $2,917,300 projected for 1990 in relation to recurrent and ongoing activities, was within the approved appropriation for the section, as explained in paragraph 30 of the Secretary-General's statement. In paragraph 31, the Secretary-General indicated that no additional resources would be required under section 29 of the programme budget for 1991 as a result of the adoption of draft resolution B.

11. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolutions, no additional appropriations would be required under sections 3 or 29 of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

12. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that his delegation had no objection to the views expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 32 and 19 of his statement of programme budget implications of the aforementioned draft resolutions (A/C.5/44/56/Rev.1), to the effect that no additional appropriations would be required under sections 3 or 29 of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, and that the activities outlined in section C of the document would become the programme of work under section 3C (Namibia) of the programme budget. While the General Assembly had not proposed any programme of work, the appropriation at the revalued resource base level reflected the full scope of activities approved by the United Nations Council for Namibia prior to Namibia's independence.

13. With regard to concrete budgetary procedures, he noted that pursuant to section V of resolution 44/201 B, the Secretary-General would submit revised estimates to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, on the basis of the activities proposed for 1990 and 1991 in the draft resolutions. His delegation therefore reserved the right to examine detailed financial implications of the proposed activities at the appropriate time.

14. In his delegation's view, the statement of programme budget implications was unusually incomplete and reflected a number of uncertainties underlying the activities proposed in the draft resolutions. For example, the redeployment, within the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system, of the staff of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia, referred to in paragraph 7 of draft resolution A, had not yet been carried out. He noted, too, that the 203 work-months, the estimated Professional-post requirements for 1990-1991, had not been costed in dollar terms. The clarification of outstanding points concerning the accounts of the United Nations Institute for Namibia still had to be completed before the liquidation of the Institute's assets. It was not clear whether the assistance which the Secretary-General might provide in the preparation of a national census would draw on extrabudgetary resources available in UNDP or other funding agencies. The same applied to the programme of assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of draft resolution A.

15. In the light of the views expressed by the Advisory Committee, his delegation understood that almost all the activities identified in the statement of programme budget implications were of a temporary nature. As pointed out by the Chairman of

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

the Advisory Committee, the functions envisaged for the United Nations Fund for Namibia and the Secretary-General would terminate with the completion, by 1994, of all programmes and activities currently financed from the Fund. In that regard, it should be underscored that the exact scope and content of most of the proposed activities depended on the wishes of the Government of Namibia.

16. The same held true with respect to the Secretary-General's task to ensure the continued role of the United Nations in the reconstruction and development of the newly independent State of Namibia, as referred to in paragraph 5 of draft resolution A. In that connection, his delegation expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General for convening the Pledging Conference for Namibia at United Nations Headquarters in June 1990. In addition to the three seminars held by the United Nations Council for Namibia in 1989, another seminar might be held, subject to the agreement of the Government of Namibia, to undertake an in-depth analysis and assessment of programmes and projects, as well as resource requirements for assistance to Namibia. In his Government's view, such assistance should be provided at the request of the Government of Namibia. It was hoped that not only the United Nations, but also all donor States, specialized agencies and other institutions of the United Nations system would provide assistance for programmes and projects which Namibia would adopt for its reconstruction and development.

17. In adopting its decision on the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications, the Fifth Committee should request the Secretary-General to take into account the views expressed during the discussion in his submission of the revised estimates to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

18. Mr. KALBITZER (Federal Republic of Germany) noted that according to paragraph 30 of document A/C.5/44/56/Rev.1, approximately $19.5 million had been appropriated in the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. He asked the Secretariat what proportion of that amount was to be spent in 1990 on the activities under consideration. The answer was not clear from the document.

19. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) noted that according to paragraph 7 of document A/C.5/44/56, if the General Assembly adopted draft resolution A, the Secretary-General would continue to provide the necessary resources to complete the implementation of the programme activities approved by the United Nations Council for Namibia for 1990. At the same time, paragraph 11 of the same document stated, in connection with draft resolution B, that the Secretary-General would seek adequate funding from appropriate sources. However, paragraph 32 of document A/C.5/44/56/Rev.1 gave the assurance that adoption of the draft resolution would entail no additional appropriations under sections 3 or 29 of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. His delegation considered that document A/C.5/44/56 could not be clearly understood without the benefit of the comments and views of the Secretary-General on the content of the revised estimates. It would have preferred to see the Committee discuss the statement of programme budget implications on the basis of those revised estimates.

(Mr. Etuket, Uganda)

20. At the forty-fourth session, during the adoption of the programme budget, the Assembly had left certain questions unresolved, including the question of programme activities to be financed under section 3C. The meaning of the words "seek adequate funding from appropriate sources" had to be clarified. It should also be borne in mind that, as the Secretary-General had pointed out, the United Nations Council for Namibia had adopted various resolutions defining a programme of work and activities up to the year 1994, when most of them would be completed.

21. In taking note of the Secretary-General's proposals in the statement of programme budget implications, and of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, his delegation wished to make it clear that all questions relating to programmes and activities envisaged in the statement should be re-examined in detail, when the Assembly had the revised estimates before it. In common with the Japanese delegation, his delegation would like its views to be taken into account when a decision was taken on the statement of financial implications.

22. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Budget Division), responding to the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, said that it was difficult to give an exact figure because work-months, not the cost of such work-months, had been indicated. A rough estimate could be given on the basis of average staff costs; thus for 1990, the total estimate would be of the order of $5.4 million. As the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and the representatives of Japan and Uganda had pointed out, the revised estimates would give a more precise figure. The statement of programme budget implications had to be issued before the revised estimates, not after. Accordingly, while he appreciated the concerns expressed by delegations, it was clear that the report could not include the same data as the revised estimates, which would cover all of section 3, not just the question of Namibia.

23. The question of the request for assistance to Namibia had to do with the development of the country. Accordingly, all the organizations traditionally involved in that field would be participating, including UNDP. The conduct of the census, referred to in the draft resolution, would depend on a request by the Government; but the latter was apparently already negotiating with UNFPA. That activity would therefore be financed from extrabudgetary resources.

24. He had taken note of the request made by the representatives of Japan and Uganda; in preparing the revised estimates, the Secretary-General would bear in mind the views expressed in the Committee.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General, and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, decided to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolutions in document A/44/24/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1/Rev.1, no additional appropriations would be required under sections 3 or 29 of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

26. It was so decided.

27. Mr. TRAXLER (Italy), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that the Twelve shared the concern expressed by the Advisory Committee regarding the quality of document A/C.5/44/56, and would have welcomed greater clarity in the presentation of the information. The Twelve looked forward to the not-too-distant future when assistance to Namibia, which was currently being provided on a special basis, could be granted on the same terms as for other Member States. Meanwhile, special arrangements should be made with the agreement of the Government of Namibia. The revised estimates for section 3C were to be considered during the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The Twelve recommended that the balance of the funds should be used in connection with activities of importance to Africa. While the Twelve had proceeded on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning the administrative and budgetary aspects, that did not imply any change in the extent to which they remained able to support the activities involved or the provisions made for funding them.

28. Mr. GROSSMAN (United States of America) noted that with the independence of Namibia, there was no longer a need to continue the Council and the Institute for Namibia. His delegation commended the Secretary-General, the Secretariat and all Member States on the success of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group. While his delegation could accept that ongoing projects should be completed, it hoped that that could be done even before 1994, when they were scheduled to be completed. His delegation was concerned about regular-budget funding for technical assistance; in its view, the funds should come from other sources, such as UNDP or the World Bank. It was regrettable that the statement of programme budget implications did not include a detailed account of the expenditure incurred in 1990 under section 3C. The United States expected that the information would be included in the revised estimates.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FOURTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
67th meeting
held on
Friday, 14 September 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 67th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/44/L.67 concerning agenda item 114

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18 September 1990

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The meeting was called to order at 4.40 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/44/L.67 concerning agenda item 114 (A/C.5/44/55)

1. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, as the Committee was not yet able to take a decision, and as consultations were continuing, consideration of the matter should be postponed to a later date.

2. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.